Remarks/Arguments:

Preliminary Matters

Claims 1-154 are presently pending in the above-identified application. Claims 1, 4, 5, 15, 18, 22-24, 52, 54, 66, 82, 88, 114, 132, 135-138, 146, 149, and 152-154 were elected for examination and claims 2, 3, 6-14, 16, 17, 19-21, 25-51, 53, 55-65, 67-81, 89-113, 115-131, 133, 134, 139-145, 147, 148, 150, and 151 are withdrawn from consideration. By this amendment, claims 22 and 153 have been cancelled and claims 1, 23, 132, and 154 have been amended. Support for the claim amendments can be found throughout the originally filed specification. For example, see page 41, lines 1-5; page 42, lines 20-28; and page 50, lines 11-19. Applicant contends that no new matter is added. Reconsideration of the pending claims is respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 102(e)

Section 5 of the Office Action recites that "Claims 1, 15, 22, 23, 24, 54, 66, 88, 114, 132, 135, 138, 146, 152, 153, and 154 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Howell et al. (U.S. Patent 6,462,644 B1)." Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are allowable over Howell et al. (herein Howell) for at least the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 1 recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Howell. Claim 1, as amended, is directed to a semiconductor and includes the following features:

> a micro processing unit;
>
> a vending equipment interface interconnected with said micro processing unit for interconnecting said semiconductor to a vending machine;
>
> a memory accessible by the micro processing unit, wherein the micro processing unit constructs and manages a MDB TRANSACTION STRING in the memory, the MDB TRANSACTION STRING comprising data fields, the micro processing unit configured to update the data fields to record transactions received through the vending equipment interface;
>
> an interactive interface interconnected with said micro processing unit, said interactive interface data communicates with a computing platform; and

> a plurality of application code executed by said micro processing unit for effectuating at least one of the following: a cashless vending transaction with said vending machine, monitoring or control of said vending machine, or data communication with a remote host computer.

This means that the semiconductor includes a micro processing unit and a memory accessible by the micro processing unit which constructs and manages a MDB TRANSACTION STRING in the memory. The MDB TRANSACTION STRING includes data fields and the micro processing unit is configured to update the data fields to record transactions received through the vending equipment interface.

As recited at page 41, lines 1-5 and page 42, lines 20-28 of the applicant's specification and illustrated in FIG. 9D, in an exemplary embodiment, the micro processing unit updates the data fields of the MDB TRANSACTION STRING (such as the VEND STATE field, a MAX VEND SALE field, a SALE PRICE field, a COLUMN field, or a VEND FLAG field) in the memory, as required, during data communication. This enables the micro processing unit to update and store data communication in the memory via the MDB TRANSACTION STRING data fields to manage and monitor transactions on the vending machine such as tracking cash/cashless vending transactions. See page 50, lines 11-19 of applicant's specification.

Howell relates to a wide area network (WAN) of vending machines that are connected to a host that builds a database of vending related information received from the vending machines (see Abstract). Howell describes at column 6, lines 49-60 and illustrates in FIGs. 4A-4D, 5A-5E, and 6A-6E that a data structure having data elements can be used in the memory of a data warehouse. Howell discloses that the data elements represent sets of prediction information and refill-visit information for a particular vending machine on a weekly or monthly basis.

The data structure disclosed in Howell is not a MDB TRANSACTION STRING that includes a string of data fields that are implemented within the memory. The claimed MDB TRANSACTION STRING includes data fields that are constructed in the memory and updated by the micro processing to record transactions. Howell, however, is devoid of data fields in a string implemented in memory such as the MDB TRANSACTION STRING. Thus, Howell fails to disclose, teach, or suggest "a memory accessible by the micro processing unit,

wherein the micro processing unit constructs and manages a MDB TRANSACTION STRING in the memory, the MDB TRANSACTION STRING comprising data fields, the micro processing unit configured to update the data fields to record transactions received through the vending equipment interface" as recited in claim 1. Accordingly, applicant submits that claim 1 is allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1 as anticipated by Howell is respectfully requested.

Claim 132, while not identical to claim 1, includes features similar to claim 1. Accordingly, applicant submits that claim 132 is also allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 132 as anticipated by Howell is respectfully requested.

Claims 4, 15, 22, 24, 54, 66, 88, and 114 include all the features of claim 1 from which they ultimately depend and claims 135, 138, 146, 152, and 154 include all the features of claim 132 from which they ultimately depend. Accordingly, applicant submits that claims 4, 15, 22, 24, 54, 66, 88, 114, 135, 138, 146, 152, and 154 are also allowable for at least the reasons that claims 1 and 132 are allowable, and withdrawal of the rejection of these claims as anticipated by Howell is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. 103(a)

Section 7 of the Office Action recites that "Claims 5, 82, 136, and 137 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Howell." Claims 5 and 82 depend directly from claim 1 and include all of the features of claim 1, and claims 136 and 137 depend directly from claim 132 and include all of the features of claim 132. As set forth above, Howell fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every feature of claims 1 and 132. As claims 5, 82, 136, and 137 include all the features of claims 1 and 132, Howell fails to disclose, teach, or suggest every feature of claims 5, 82, 136, and 137. Accordingly, applicant contends that claims 5, 82, 136, and 137 are allowable and, therefore, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 5, 82, 136, and 137.

Section 8 of the Office Action recites that "Claims 18 and 149 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Howell in view of Squires (U.S. Patent 7,032,038)." Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are presently allowable over Howell and Squires for at least the following reasons. Claim 18 depends directly from claim 1 and includes all of the features and limitations of claim 1. Claim 149 depends directly from claim 132 and includes all of the features and limitations of claim 132. The feature

that was found to be lacking in Howell with respect to claims 18 and 149 is not found in Squires, namely, "a memory accessible by the micro processing unit, wherein the micro processing unit constructs and manages a MDB TRANSACTION STRING in the memory, the MDB TRANSACTION STRING comprising data fields, the micro processing unit configured to update the data fields to record transactions received through the vending equipment interface." Thus, Squires fails to make up for the deficiencies of Howell. Accordingly, applicant contends that claims 18 and 149 are allowable and, therefore, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 18 and 149.

Section 9 of the Office Action recites that "Claim 52 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Howell in view of Miller et al. (U.S. Patent 5,959,869)." Applicant respectfully submits that these claims are presently allowable over Howell and Miller et al. for at least the following reasons. Claim 52 depends directly from claim 1 and includes all of the features and limitations of claim 1. The feature that was found to be lacking in Howell with reference to claims 52 is not found in Miller, namely, "a memory accessible by the micro processing unit, wherein the micro processing unit constructs and manages a MDB TRANSACTION STRING in the memory, the MDB TRANSACTION STRING comprising data fields, the micro processing unit configured to update the data fields to record transactions received through the vending equipment interface." Thus, Miller fails to make up for the deficiencies of Howell. Accordingly, applicant contends that claim 52 is allowable and, therefore, respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 52.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, applicant submits that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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The Director is hereby authorized to charge or credit Deposit Account No. **18-0350** for any additional fees, or any underpayment or credit for overpayment in connection herewith.

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